1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
SP23 Trumai SP23

Specialization and Trade

439 Among the more distinctive features of upper Xingú culture are community craft specialization and a widespread system of trade re- [438] lationships. The Trumaí traded among themselves, but the most important exchanges took place on the intertribal level, and it is here that the products of tribal specialization become significant to the economy. [182] At the time of Quain's investigations, the Arawakans maintained a [323] monopoly on pottery, but the once active Trumaí stone axe manufacture had fallen into disuse. In its place, the Trumaí were specializing [317] in the preparation of salt, obtained by burning a species of water-lily and sifting the ashes. The Trumaí depended on the Kamayurá for a highly prized type of bow, as the proper wood was not found in their [911] territory. According to Oberg, this black, rectangular bow was eagerly sought by other tribes, also.[29]

While the Kamayurá monopoly on these bows can be explained by the local availability of the raw materials, craft specialization cannot be looked upon simply as a function of the exclusive possession of certain skills. Other arts diffused rapidly among the tribes, and it is evident that the specialties remained such for non-economic reasons. For example, the three Arawakan tribes, the Mehinaku, Kustenaú and Waurá, all made pottery, but each traded their wares only with certain tribes. The Bacairí obtained their pottery from the Kustenaú, who were, in von den Steinen's time, their neighbors on the Batoví River. On the Kuliseu, the Nahukwa traded for ceramics with the nearby Mehinaku, while the Tupian-speaking tribes and the Trumaí relied on the Waurá. Despite the fact that each Arawakan tribe dealt with its nearest neighbors, the exclusiveness of these relationships is not a physical necessity. [602] The Trumaí could have obtained Mehinaku pottery. They had many [881] kinship ties with the Mehinaku, and even conducted joint puberty rites. The distance between them was not great. Manifestly some standardized channeling of trade relationships existed.

This is further confirmed by the confinement of pottery manufacture to the Arawakans. It is probable that when the various groups first settled in the area, the Arawakans were the only ceramicists. With the development of close intertribal relationships, however, there was every opportunity for the craft to diffuse. It could have been learned by outsiders in trips to Arawakan villages and then practiced at home, as the clay is easily gotten from the river bottoms. Obvious means for its diffusion were marriage or capture of Arawakan women. But the manufacture of pottery was not observed by Quain in any non-Arawakan village of the area, despite the fact that Arawakan women were living [303] in many such communities. In the Trumaí village no pottery was made,

[29] Oberg 1953, p. 30.